

this year. I speak for all of the conferees when I congratulate him for putting together this bill. While it is not perfect, I support H.R. 1654 and hope that the Senate will adopt the conference report.

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I rise in support of the conference report on H.R. 1654, the NASA Authorization bill. First, I thank Chairman MCCAIN and the other Senate conferees. We have come to a bi-partisan agreement after many months of conference and now we have the opportunity to pass a NASA Authorization bill for the first time since fiscal year 1993.

As you know, NASA is one of the agencies of government that captures the spirit of the American people. Who can fail to be awed by the liftoff of a Space Shuttle, a walk in space, or the discovery of water on Mars? Because NASA is such a treasure, it is important that we in Congress exercise our duty to oversee and authorize its programs.

And that is just what this conference report does. H.R. 1654 would authorize funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration at the appropriated level of \$13.6 billion in FY 2000. It provides \$14.2 billion in FY 2001 and \$14.6 billion in FY 2002, slightly more than the President's requested level.

The bill fully funds the Space Shuttle program, the International Space Station, and the Space Launch Initiative. It provides authorizations above the requested levels for the Space Grant College program, the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, EPSCoR, and NASA's research into aircraft noise reduction and cleaner, more energy-efficient aircraft engine technology—research that can improve the quality of life of Americans who live near airports.

When we were nearing the finish line with this bill, the Administration contacted us about several key concerns they had with the bill. We have resolved their concerns, and now I would like to run through these issues: our interaction with International Space Station partners, commercialization of the Space Station, Trans-Hab, Shuttle Safety, and Triana.

International partners and the space station: We successfully altered House-proposed language which was overly punitive. The provision contained in H.R. 1654 encourages NASA to provide for equitable use of the Space Station by seeking reduction in utilization rights (like crew allocation) for International Partners that willfully violate any of their commitments to the program.

Space station commercialization: The conferees agreed to leave in place the Space Station Commercial Development program and did not agree to the House's proposal to eliminate the program. We did, however, shorten the

period of time for which the program is authorized from 2004 to 2002. The program will be up for reauthorization at the same time that NASA itself is due for reauthorization.

Trans-hab: NASA has considered replacing the "hard" habitation module for the Space Station with an inflatable "Trans-Hab." The House had sought to prohibit NASA from using its funds to develop an inflatable habitation module. The conference agreement clarifies that NASA is permitted to lease or use a commercially-developed Trans-Hab. It is my understanding that NASA is currently evaluating a very serious commercial proposal for an inflatable space structure capable of accommodating humans in space, and this language should allow them to participate in such an agreement.

Shuttle safety: The Administration was concerned that the Senate-passed cost cap on the International Space Station and Shuttle flights to assemble the Station might send the wrong message about Shuttle and Station crew safety. That concern sent up a red flag to the conferees—no cost limitation proposed in this legislation should make NASA hesitate for one moment in launching the Shuttle if a life was at stake. No one wants to jeopardize the life and safety of the crew of the Space Station. We inserted language to ensure that the cap would not apply to costs incurred to ensure or enhance the safety or reliability of the Space Shuttle and another provision to allow the Administrator to use monies provided beyond the cap to improve safety or to launch a shuttle to protect the Station and its crew.

Triana: Finally, the House agreed to take out its provision to terminate the Triana program. Triana will be the world's first Earth-observing mission to L1, the gravitational mid-point between the sun and the Earth. From this vantage point, the satellite has a continuous view of the Sun-lit portion of the Earth. Over 90 percent of the instrument development has already taken place, and we've already spent about \$40 million.

NASA highlighted several legislative provisions which they feel would be beneficial, yet are not included in the bill. While I would not support all of those provisions, I am disappointed we could not include some of the provisions that represent their greatest needs in this Conference Report.

I would also like to highlight a few of H.R. 1654's other major provisions. The Conference Report imposes a \$25.0 billion cost cap for International Space Station development and a \$17.7 billion cost cap for Space Shuttle launch costs in connection with Station assembly. The cap would not apply to operations, research, or crew return activities after the Station is complete. An additional contingency fund of \$5 billion for

Station development and \$3.5 billion for Space Shuttle is authorized to provide flexibility in case of an emergency or other unusual circumstance.

As you know, I am a strong supporter of the International Space Station Program. The Space Shuttle *Discovery* is currently on the 100th Space Shuttle mission, putting cargo and other items in place so that the Station is ready to be occupied by its permanent crew next month.

The cap on Station development in the bill does not seek to alter or impede that program in any way. It merely seeks to limit the development costs so we stick to the plan and put a fully-operational Space Station on orbit in a timely manner.

The bill also directs NASA, after Congressional review of their plan, to establish a non-governmental organization (NGO) to manage Space Station research and commercial activities upon completion of the Station. I understand that some members are concerned about this provision. I will simply note: (1) NASA is already in the process of evaluating and establishing an NGO to manage station research; and (2) our bill allows Congress nearly 4 months to react to NASA's proposal before it can be implemented. If we don't like what they come back with, we can tell them not to do it.

H.R. 1654 represents the culmination of several years of hard work, and it is a good piece of legislation. I don't like every provision in the bill, but it represents a fine compromise—and one it looked like we might never reach. Again, I would like to thank Chairman MCCAIN and Senator FRIST for their hard work and to thank our staffs, in particular Floyd DesChamps, Elizabeth Probst, and Jean Toal Eisen.

I urge the swift adoption of the conference report.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the conference report be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the report be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORRECTING THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 1654

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that H. Con. Res. 409, a concurrent resolution, which corrects the enrollment of H.R. 1654 be agreed to and the motion to reconsider with laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 409) was agreed to.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM AMENDMENT

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Governmental